

"OLD JOHN'S" TRAGIC QUEST.

Vigil for His Son's Body Invites Hunger and Rheumatism.

HE HAUNTS THE RIVER.

John Synax Seeks Help at the Journal's Relief Bureau.

THEN RESUMES HIS WATCH

Louis Alphonitz Makes a Strange Use of a Dispossess Warrant.

IT IS HIS VISITING CARD.

Unable to Pronounce His Name Intelligibly He Refers Inquirers to the Legal Document—Other Incidents of a Day's Charity.

"It is Old John," said the woman in the faded brown Mother Hubbard.

"Who'd-a-thought it?" ejaculated the woman with the baby. "He must be mortal hungry to lose sight of the river at this time of day."

There were others who recognized "Old John," and even the children made way for him, with a certain awe, as he hobbled painfully to the counter.

A curious looking little creature he was, with iron gray hair that dangled in wisps down the back of his withered neck. His face was a perfect network of wrinkles, the deepest of which converged to his eyes, as the lines on a railroad map converge to the points representing cities. The effect of this was to give the old man's face a look of intense and constant scrutiny.

"It's watching the river for his son's body makes him stare like that," was the sotto voce explanation volunteered by a pale man who had observed the interest old John's appearance had excited among the workers in the Journal's relief bureau.

Standing himself on his crutches John Synax, the lone watcher of the Jackson street pier, watched the process of filling with coffee and soup and stew the pails handed up by a little girl.

"I didn't bring a pail myself," he said, in a quivering voice, "because I didn't know. The fact is I expect to see my son Tom every minute, and I only came up from the dock for a few minutes because I really ought to keep up my strength until his body rises. I'm all twisted up with rheumatism lately, for it's cold work watching over there by the river."

It was many and many a year since Thomas Synax left old John from the Jackson street pier while he was fishing from the stringpiece. The body was never seen again, although John Synax, who was then a prosperous East Side merchant, tried to recover it by every known means. Long after the most experienced watermen despaired of success he continued to hire men to scrimp for the body of his son.

It was good business for the grapplers, but it was bad for John Synax's fortune, which diminished rapidly to the end of his life. And even since he has been destitute, old John has continued to watch and wait, and stare and stare, at the gray tide that swirls round the piers at the foot of Jackson street.

Old John needed other things besides food. He needed clothing to keep him warm, and shoes to protect his rheumatic feet. The bureau supplied him with such necessities as that, and then he hastened back to the water front as fast as his crutches could carry him.

His Card a Dispossess Warrant.

A careworn woman and three miles of children formed the escort of a man whose eager expression was obviously inspired by the heap of children's shoes waiting for distribution in the city. The man was Louis Alphonitz, and he was a dispossess warrant, although subsequent developments showed that he was desperately hungry. All four were dressed in pitiful rags.

When the man was asked his name, he replied in an accent that failed to lend to his name any of the English syllables. Again and again he tried to pronounce the name in such a way that it could be written down. His wife tried, too, and even the children looked on with interest as well as they could, while they sniffed the fragrance of rich food. But the sound was still obscure to a American ear.

With a despairing gesture the man at length drew from his pocket a blue paper. "My name is written there," he said.

It was a card, but an unusual one. The blue paper was a dispossess warrant. The intelligent clerk of the court had made out the name of the defendant as Louis Alphonitz, and as Louis Alphonitz it was entered on the register of the bureau.

The man whose card de visite was a dispossess warrant was a man of a different order. The same process was applied to his children and his wife, and it agreed with them, for they were all named Louis Alphonitz. The man who worked wherever he could, and had no sleep, the man of evil eye, was a man of the same name.

Wanted Shoes for the Twins.

But the most interesting caller was Mrs. Loreta Rinkovitz, of No. 45 Essex street. She was an air of anxiety mingled with embarrassment, as she said:

"Could you please oblige me with some shoes?"

"Certainly, if we can find a pair to fit your feet," was the brisk rejoinder. "What size are your feet?"

"No, no! They're not for me," she replied, the faintest tinge of pink climbing from her cheeks to her temples. "It's the babies' feet I want."

"Oh, girl of boy? And how old, please?"

"The pink shoes became deeper, and Mrs. Rinkovitz's eyes were fixed on the clerk. "They ought to be quite small," she said at length. "Just teensy, weensy little shoes. And it doesn't matter whether it's a boy or a girl."

The applicant recovered some of her composure while the weensy, weensy articles were being sorted out, and imparted the information that she was already the mother of four children, two of whom—the last—were twins.

"But surely that would not happen again," she concluded, plaintively. "Al-though—"

She had fastened her eyes upon a second pair of "booties," very similar to the pair that had been selected for her. That glance was more eloquent than words, and it was a sign of satisfaction, as of one who is on the safe side, that she departed with the four small shoes under her arm.

The demand for shoes was strong all over yesterday. Journal readers had sent contributions from far and wide, for the need was greater than the supply, and will continue to be greater until the children's shoe fund has arrived at a figure that will make it a real benefit to the suffering little ones of the tenements.

Mr. Dunn's prediction of a snow storm, confirmed by the little flurry that occurred just before the bureau's closing hour, cre-



SHOWING THE JOURNAL'S RELIEF SHOES TO HER MOTHER.

ated something approximating a panic among the children whose shoes are worn away to mere shreds. It is bad enough to be obliged to wear such mockeries of protection in mild weather, but when the streets and sidewalks are a freezing morass the condition of the city and boys of the tenements becomes terrible.

Do Not Let the Children Suffer.

Contributions are earnestly invited for the CHILDREN'S SHOE FUND, whereby the little ones of the tenements will be provided with efficient protection for their feet, now exposed to the severity of the weather and the roughness of the cobblestones. There could be no more humane avenue of expenditure than this, for the need of shoes is one of the most hideous symptoms of misery among the children of the city.

Among those who contributed to the supply of clothing yesterday were: Mrs. Denning, of No. 1844 East One Hundred and Fifty-sixth street; Mrs. Fisher, of No. 397 Park avenue; L. D. Aperry, of the "Sunny Home," No. 288 West Twenty-second street; Mrs. C. D. McMillan, of Dobbs Ferry, N. Y.; Leslie H. Smith, of Sing Sing, N. Y.; "A Friend," Silas Peckblow, of Subline, Me.; S. W. Brown, of Bayonne, N. J.; Dr. McDougal, of No. 366 Bergen avenue, Jersey City; and A. J. Riddell, of No. 142 West Thirtieth street.

JOURNAL SHOE FUND.

Robert J. Minx, of the New York Life Insurance Co., \$10.00
H. F. ... 1.00
Baby Helene30
Mame O'Hara50
Memo New York City ... 5.00
In memory of Elliott Haswell ... 2.00
S. & V. ... 20.00
Employees of A. Schroeder & Sons (fourth contribution), ... 7.75
S. H. Walker, East Northfield, ... 5.00
Mass. ... 5.00
Total ... \$53.85

BETTING TURNS TO FITZ.

Rumor of Corbett's Condition Affects Local Sentiment and the Australian's Stock Jumps.

Within the last twenty-four hours the betting on the result of the fight has taken a decided turn in favor of Fitzsimmons. The fact that this is a Corbett section makes this change all the more remarkable. For the past four days every bit of Corbett's money offered has been snapped up, until the Australian's stock has jumped from 100 to 100 to 100 to 85.

The cause of this unexpected fluctuation in Fitzsimmons's favor is a tip received by a few prominent sporting men of this city that Corbett's condition is not what it ought to be, in spite of all the accounts and his physician's findings which came from the West recently.

These shrewd gamblers must be genuinely impressed with the truth of this inside information, as they are willing to bet \$100,000 on Fitz.

There is no fake about this commission. The name of this pugilistic plunger is withheld for private reasons, but his commissioners are Dick Roche, Eolo Pearson and Adolph Pappenberg, the well-known bookmakers. Dick Roche last night at the Morton House offered to bet \$100,000 against \$20,000 that Fitzsimmons will win, and stated that his commission was unlimited. Eolo Pearson made the rounds of the big hotels in search of Corbett's admirers, while bookmaker Pappenberg took for a at the Hoffman, eager to accept any offer of the Californian's friends.

Dick Roche went to E. W. Kearney last night that he could spend the \$100,000 against \$20,000, and double or triple it if Mr. Kearney wished. Ex-Sheriff Sexton was fortunate enough to secure \$300 against \$20, which he bet on Fitzsimmons, while Senator Tim Sullivan also got on the Australian for a neat sum.

"Eolo Pearson," who has \$500 bet on Corbett, but is holding off in hopes that he will get even money, "Eolo Pearson also offered to wager \$100 that Fitzsimmons will be the favorite in the betting at the ring side.

Even Money in Boston.

Boston, Mass., Feb. 20.—Not only one but two consequences were made here today on the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight. Luke Robinson, an ardent admirer of Corbett, at the Quincy House, bet \$200 even with Henry Roberts, a Portland sporting man, that Corbett would win in ten rounds.

"Corbett," said Robinson, "is twice as clever as the Commission, and can hit far as hard. Fitz has gone back, more-

over, and that is why I made the bet."

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Chicago, Feb. 20.—Betting on the big fight continues quiet in Chicago. There is no end of talk, but very little money in sight. The general impression is that the condition of the city and boys of the tenements becomes terrible.

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No More Ships for the Navy.

Washington, Feb. 20.—The Naval Appropriation bill will come to the House without provision for an increase of the navy. This agreement was reached today, when the matter of one battleship and one composite sailing vessel for the Naval Academy, recommended by the subcommittee, was reconsidered. After a general discussion a motion to strike out the increase provision was carried.

Choate Family Sails for Genoa.

Joseph H. Choate, Mrs. Choate and Miss Mabel Choate were passengers on the North German Lloyd steamer Kaiser Wilhelm II., which left this port yesterday for Genoa.

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PARKS MUST BE PRESERVED.

Strong Sentiment Against Giving Away Public Property.

NO GIFT TO TRACTION.

If Union Square Must Be Mutilated the Company Should Pay.

MERCHANT DANIEL'S PLAN.

He Suggests Extending Broadway Directly Through the Park at Fourteenth Street.

PLANS TO AVOID THE CURVE.

President Vreeland, of the Metropolitan Traction Company—An arched tunnel to run under the park, with an ornamental entrance at Fourteenth street.

John Daniell, Jr., Broadway mer-

chant—Run Broadway through the park, also the tracks, thus creating two parks in place of one.

Rev. Arthur C. Kimball—Condemn the property on the west side of Broadway, at Fourteenth street, let the company buy it and run their tracks in a direct line.

Park President Samuel McMillan—Donate part of the park property to the company without exacting compensation therefor.

Mayor Strong—in favor of President McMillan's plan.

Park Commissioner Cruger—Opposed to any plan that would destroy the present appearance of the park or reduce its area.

Engineer Pierson, of the Traction Company—Run cars from Broadway to Union square, on Fourteenth street, and from thence in a straight line up Broadway.

Henry G. Isacett, engineering expert—Run a half tunnel and rustic bridge through the park. Such a tunnel now crosses Boston Commons.

President McMillan's proposal to donate a liberal slice of Union square to the use of the Broadway cable road, without requiring any compensation therefor, has awakened a storm of criticism and objections in all quarters of the city and all classes of society.

Business men, Aldermen, engineers and persons connected with various sociological and philanthropic societies are among the principal objectors to Mr. McMillan's proposed "dead of gift" to the Metropolitan Traction Company, and many of them, in stating their objections to Mr. McMillan's plan, also offer suggestions looking to the elimination or reduction of "Dead Man's Curve" by other means, which do not involve the reduction of the city's park area nor throw the burden of expense for correcting the Traction company's error upon the municipality.

The Rev. Arthur C. Kimball, of the East Side Good Government Club, and a member of the Committee on the Location of New East Side Parks, makes this suggestion:

"Let the Traction Company do as the T. road would have to do in the circumstances. That is, let the company condemn a strip of property from a point below Fourteenth street on Broadway, through to a point on Fourteenth street in range of upper Broadway. Let them pay the value of this property as settled by duly appointed appraisers put down the buildings in the way and tear their tracks through in a straight line at their own expense. There is no earthly reason why the city should bear the expense or give away park property for the purpose of enabling a money-making private corporation to straighten out its tracks."

Tracks Through the Park.

John Daniell, Jr., the Broadway merchant, who has given much study to "Dead Man's Curve" presented his ideas and drawings to the Mayor yesterday.

Mr. Daniell's plan comprehends the entire reconstruction of Union square. He would carry lower Broadway at its full width, five feet between the curbs, diagonally across the park from Fourteenth street to the point midway between Sixteenth and Seventeenth streets, where it would naturally connect with upper Broadway, making the street continuous and permitting the car tracks to follow a straight line.

To compensate for the space thus taken from the end of the park, Mr. Daniell would reduce the width of the paved street and square surface bordering the park proper by narrowing Union Square East and Union Square West to the width of Fourteenth street, 100 feet between the building lines. He would add all this space to the park area, and would also extend the southeast and southwest corners of the park proper to the natural street corner lines so marked out, taking in the Washington statue on the east and the Lincoln statue on the west. This would shape the park area of the square to the quadrangle form of the square proper, leaving a street 100 feet in width on the east, west and south sides, and the great open space for public meetings on the north practically as it now is. By so doing Mr. Daniell calculates to add 60,000 square feet to the park area, after taking out the strip, 550 feet long and 55 feet wide—some 30,250 square feet in all—required for extending Broadway through the square.

For Two Parks.

All the trees and statues removed would be relocated in positions harmonious to the new scheme of landscape gardening. In brief, Mr. Daniell would make two parks in Union Square, divided by a broad asphalted boulevard traversed by the cable cars and passenger-carrying vehicles.

Mayor Strong looked over Mr. Daniell's plan with interest and compared it closely with the one submitted by President McMillan.

"I think Mr. McMillan's plan is the most practical," he said.

The Mayor finally referred Mr. Daniell to the Commissioners of Public Parks, and he went directly to Commissioner Cruger's office. Mr. Cruger examined it, but said, as had Mayor Strong previously, that he preferred Mr. McMillan's plan.

"I told Mr. Daniell," said Mr. Cruger, "that I was strongly opposed to any plan comprehending the extension of Broadway through the park, and that I thought the Park Board would be a unit in opposition to any such plan. I don't think much of his plan. It would cut the park in two and necessitate the cutting down of a lot of fine trees and the removal of many of the statues. As I said yesterday, I am also opposed to any scheme involving a reduction of the park area; but, at the same time, humanity compels us to take into account the number of people killed and unimpaired at the curve, and of the two evils I think Mr. McMillan's plan of cutting off a small slice of the park is the least."

Mayor Strong's Favorite.

Mayor Strong would not discuss Mr. Daniell's plan at any great length. "I don't like the idea of carrying Broadway across the square," said he. "It involves too many changes. I prefer Mr. McMillan's plan."

Mr. Daniell, however, is enthusiastic about his own plan.

"I've nothing to say against the one suggested by Mr. McMillan," said he, "except that it abridges the park area very considerably, and doesn't do away with the bothersome curves entirely at that."

In the office of the Chief Engineer of Construction of the Metropolitan Street Railway Company are two more plans looking to the reduction of "Dead Man's Curve." It is needless to say that neither of them comprehends the purchase, by condemnation or otherwise, of any property by the company.

One of the plans was drawn some months ago by Mr. Pierson, one of the company's engineers. It comprehends the running of the cable cars from Broadway west on Fourteenth street to the middle of Union square, thence turning to the westward, in a straight line, to the westward of the Lincoln statue, north, in a straight line, up Union square west and into upper Broadway.

The plan would make only two curves necessary instead of the three now traversed in getting around the square, said Assistant Engineer Starrett. There was another plan drawn to working scale, which comprehended a compound curve to the westward, down Union square west and around the lower corner of the Park into Fourth avenue or Union square East, thence north, turning west through Seventeenth street, and by the same curve swinging into Broadway. The only advantages that this plan would offer are included in the plan of the company's engineers, and from thence in a straight line up Broadway.

"It wouldn't touch any of the park territory; oh, no! We've always had to consider that sacred till now. We did hope to go underneath it once, but we never projected any plans involving the slightest encroachment upon the park surface."

Mr. Starrett refused to discuss the merits of the plan, but the McMillan or the Daniell suggestion.

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